"those enduring matinee idols"

A CHRONOLOGICAL LOOK AT SOUND SERIALS (1929 - 1956)

CHAPTER 11
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This rocket-propelled craft, circa 1952, is headed towards the satellite Moon in Republic Pictures' serial RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON. It is yet another splendid example of the professional work done by Howard Lydecker, head of Republic's special effects department, in re-creating realism. Difficult to detect, tho clearly visible in the original photo under a high-powered magnifying glass, are the two guide wires supporting the allegedly rocket-thrust airship, plus a third wire pulling it across what is known in the movie industry as a "plate". To wit, the landscape was photographed and then later rear projected on a screen (a "plate") while a camera up front filmed the sequence of the miniature rocket ship transversing the screen.

MASTHEAD: THE GREEN HORNET (Gordon Jones) and HAWK OF THE WILDERNESS (Herman Brix).

REPUBLIC PICTURES PRESENTS

ZORRO RIDES AGAIN

DIRECTED BY
WILLIAM WITNEY • JOHN ENGLISH

ZORRO marked two important firsts for Republic serials: (1) It was the initial effort of 17 that combined the directing talents of Bill Witney and Jack English; (2) Alberto Colombo received deserved credit for his first of four original musical scores. He was succeeded by William Lava, who was equally talented at composing "action" music.

There can be no quarrel with ZORRO's excellent cast: John Carroll (*James Vega/Zorro*), sang several songs in a rich baritone voice and had no problem with the histrionics required; Helen Christian (*Joyce Andrews*); Reed Howes (*Philip Andrews*), a veteran serial performer; Duncan Renaldo (*Renaldo*), superb in "old man" make-up; Noah Beery (*Marsden*) provided "delicious theatrical villainy" in every episode, albeit briefly in most; Richard Alexander (*Brad Dace/El Lobo*); Nigel de Brulier (*Don Manuel Vega*), billed thru-out the serial but killed-off in the initial episode; Mona Rico (*Carmelita*, Renaldo's niece); Tom London (*O'Shea*, superintendent of the railroad construction camp); and a couple of always reliable heavies, Robert Kortman (*Trellinger*) and Jack Ingram (*Carter*).

This was Republic's last serial for the year, released 11/20/37. 21 years later it was re-edited and shown as a 68 minute feature.

No question here that Yakima Canutt is doubling John Carroll as Zorro in this confrontation with Richard Alexander (El Lobo).

John Carroll

CHAPTER TITLES

1. Death from the Sky
2. The Fatal Minute
3. Juggernaut
4. Unmasked!
5. Sky Pirates
6. The Fatal Shot
7. Burning Embers
8. Plunge of Peril
9. Tunnel of Terror
10. Trapped!
11. Right of Way
12. Retribution

Don Diego Vega (Zorro) was originally conceived by Johnston McCulley in his 1919 story, "The Curse of Capistrano."

FOREWORD for the serial (and *not* the featurized version) said: "The Republic of Mexico — The United States of America — Good Neighbors! For a century friendly hands have been clasped across the border in token of enduring peace. And yet, from time to time, this peace has been endangered by the money-mad plottings of sinister groups. The reign of terror inspired by one such group is our story . . . and into this Zorro Rides Again!"

Brain behind the "sinister group" is J. A. Marsden, head of a firm of investment bankers, with headquarters in Los Angeles. Carrying out his orders (always relayed by short wave radio) is Brad Dace, a murderous outlaw leader known as El Lobo. He and his men conduct a series of raids against the California-Yucatan railroad. Three of the largest stockholders in the company are Don Manuel Vega; Philip Andrews, a young engineer; and, his sister, Joyce. The trio knows that in Marsden's hands the railroad would be ruinous to Mexico. Don Manuel opinions: "The welfare of thousands of our people depends upon our construction of the railroad. No . . . we will not sell (even if it will stop El Lobo's raids)." He sends an impassioned letter to his nephew, James Vega, imploring him to come home. "You are the last of the Vegas, a true descendant of the great Zorro. It's your fight!"

James agrees to return and the trio is delighted, as is Renaldo, the elderly major-domo of the Vegas household. Prior to James' "official arrival", El Lobo and some of his minions enter the Vega hacienda and try to force the group to sell their holdings. When they refuse, El Lobo tells his men to ". . . start to work. And make the fire a good one."

Enter (thru a window) a masked figure in black, bullwhip in one hand and gun in the other. He uses both to disarm El Lobo and one of his men. The lights go out, a fight ensues, and the heavies flee.

When Don Manuel asks the masked one who he is, the reply is: "You may call me Zorro . . . Zorro has been dead these many years, but the spirit of Zorro will never die."

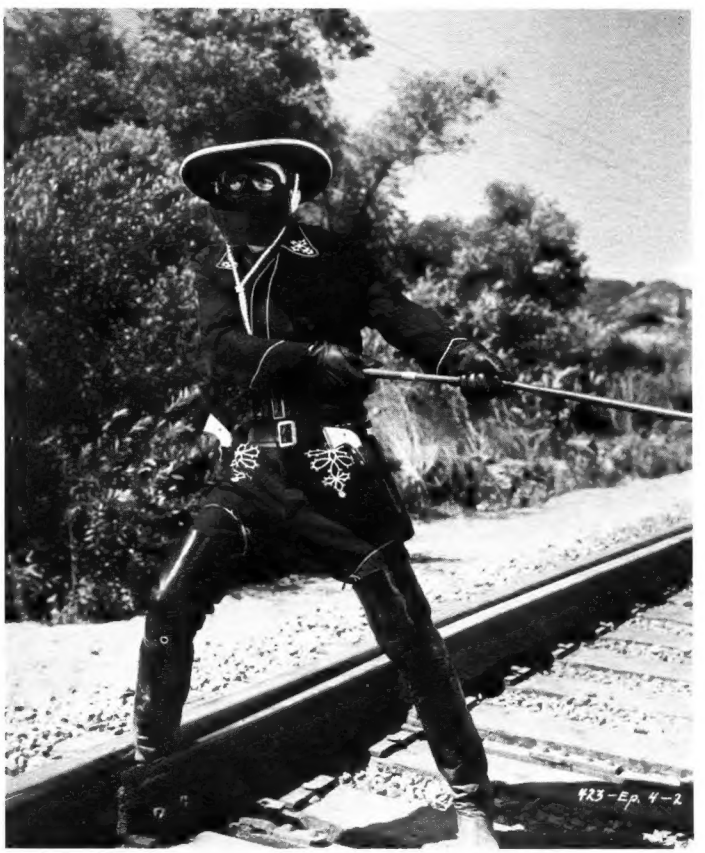
The arrival of James Vega is a heart-breaking disappointment to Don Manuel, Philip and Joyce. While away at college, he has apparently become an idle, pleasure-loving fop, who seems to show no interest in the railroad. An attempt at getting James to ride El Rey (a horse descended from the original Zorro's mount) is disastrous with the horse throwing James and running away.

Marsden orders, via radio, El Lobo and his men to attack the railroad's desert work camp. The construction boss, O'Shea, manages to call the Vega hacienda and Joyce, Philip and Don Manuel drive to the battle site, only to find themselves trapped with the workers. Zorro makes another appearance and manages to drive off El Lobo and his men, but not before Don Manuel is fatally wounded in the battle. Before he dies, he asks Zorro to let him see who he really is. As the others turn away, Zorro lifts his mask to reveal that he is James Vega!

Marsden, enraged at Zorro's interference with his plans, orders Brad to sabotage a special train carrying the railroad payroll. James learns of the plan and races on El Rey to catch up with the doomed train. He manages to board the last car where Philip and Joyce are riding.

Overhead, El Lobo starts bombing the train from his plane. The explosions get closer and closer. Zorro, Philip and Joyce duck as the last bomb blast apparently hits the train and all are blotted out in the explosion. Editor's Note: This build-up and climax to chapter one was loaded with suspense. Fortunately, "next week" the trio are found not injured by the blast, since the bomb had only hit *near* the train. Zorro fires at El Lobo's plane and makes contact with a vital part, forcing the heavy to turn back.

Another good cliff-hanger (reminiscent of the silent PERILS OF PAULINE when Pearl White is tied to railroad tracks and a train comes speeding hell-bent for her) is the wind-up of chapter three. Zorro tries to foil El Lobo in his attempt to derail a supply train. The chief heavy manages to trap Zorro's foot in the rails when he pulls the switch control. The episode ended with Zorro waving frantically at the thundering locomotive racing towards him . . .



. . . and the next episode had Zorro using his whip to pull the track switch in time to save himself and the train from destruction.

At the serial's wind-up, a wild shootout takes place in the camp of the enemies. This is followed by (taken from the script):

Medium shot, side angle — Zorro's horse jumps up and down on body of El Lobo on the ground.

Medium close shot —Zorro leaning against rock smiles.

Long shot — Phil's men circling band of outlaws in center.

Interesting that Marsden, for all his planned deviltry, apparently escapes apprehension in the final chapter—and El Lobo meets a violent death, with Zorro smiling at the feat.

Here are the official lyrics to the title song, attributed to four composers: Alberto Columbo, Walter Hirsch, Eddie Cherkose and Lou Handman.

Zorro rides again into the night,
Riding along, singing a song.
Zorro lives, he takes, then he gives . . .
Happy and gay,
Singing away . . .
I laugh at life, thru storm and strife
With a mighty grip, crack my whip.
With courage bold like knights of old,
Rollicking on,
Into the dawn.
Hear ye, men, for
Zorro Rides Again,
Riding along,
Singing a song.

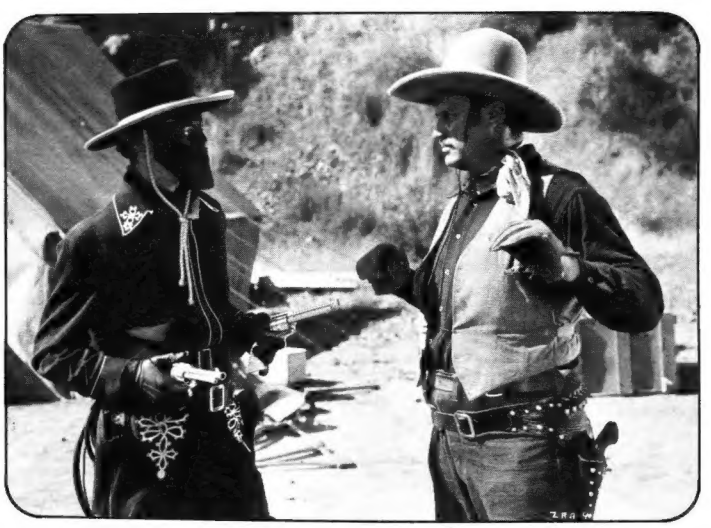
El Lobo and his raiders invade the Mexican hacienda of Don Manuel Vega. Standing L. to R. are Trellinger, *actor Al Taylor*, El Lobo, Renaldo, Vega, Joyce and Philip. A heavy stumbles in. Zorro's first appearance follows. (1)

J. A. Marsden, in Los Angeles, keeps in contact with El Lobo via short wave radio. He tries to seize the California-Yucatan Railroad Co. after his offers to the principal owners (Vega, Joyce and Philip) fail. (2)

Acting in the role of an indolent fop, James Vega is in reality Zorro—aided by elderly Renaldo. Behind the painting of James' great grandfather is a secret passage leading to a cave where El Rey, Zorro's horse, is hidden. (3)

Zorro saves Carmelita, Renaldo's niece, from El Lobo's ruthlessness. (Here Zorro is doubled by stuntman Yakima Canutt, who was an expert with a bullwhip.) (4)

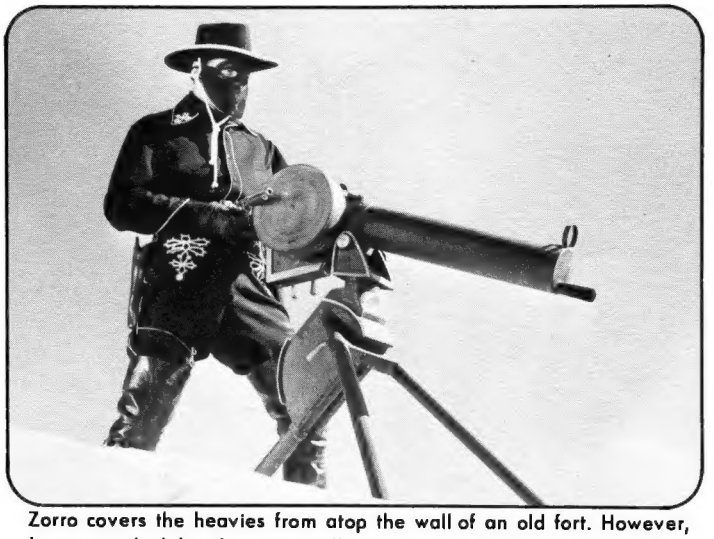
At one of the railroad campsites, El Lobo and his raiders attack. In foreground L. to R. are O'Shea, Philip and Joyce. Don Manuel Vega is killed in the battle. (5)



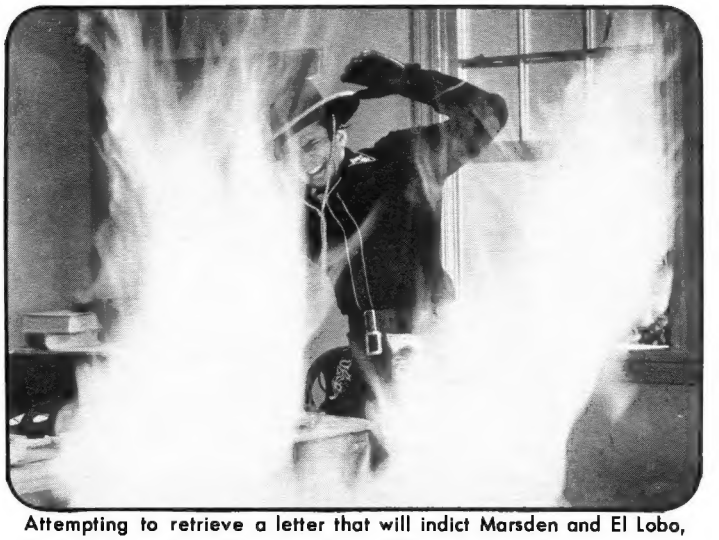
Zorro appears in time to save Joyce and Philip. He tells El Lobo: "Call off your men. Refuse and you're dead." El Lobo obeys. Zorro promises: "We will meet again." (6)

Marsden orders the railroad supply train wrecked. El Lobo plans to switch it to a dead-end track—and ultimate disaster. Zorro and El Lobo battle furiously for the switch control. (7)

El Lobo plans to send important papers via plane to Marsden in L.A. Trellinger is at left. James appears, disguised as a Mexican, and takes over the plane. He loses control and the ship crashes—landing on its back! (8)



Zorro covers the heavies from atop the wall of an old fort. However, he is attacked by the supposedly unconscious Trellinger. Both fall to the ground. Zorro looks up to face the guns of El Lobo and his gang—poised to shoot him! (9)



Attempting to retrieve a letter that will indict Marsden and El Lobo, Zorro is trapped inside a burning building. In the film, he wore his mask. However, in this publicity photo, it's on the desk at lower left corner. (10)

Zorro and Renaldo fly to Los Angeles and break into Marsden's office via the building roof. Later, Zorro is forced to leap to an adjoining building. He loses his balance and falls into the chasm between the two structures. (11)

El Lobo schemes to wreck a special train carrying railroad records to Mexico City. To overtake the train, Zorro is successful in getting the help of a truck driver. Hastily painted over lettering is P.I.E. (Pacific Intermountain Express). (12)

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS

SECRET AGENT X-9

Directed By
Ford Beebe and Cliff Smith

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Photos and Captions from
James A. Stringham

CHAPTER TITLES

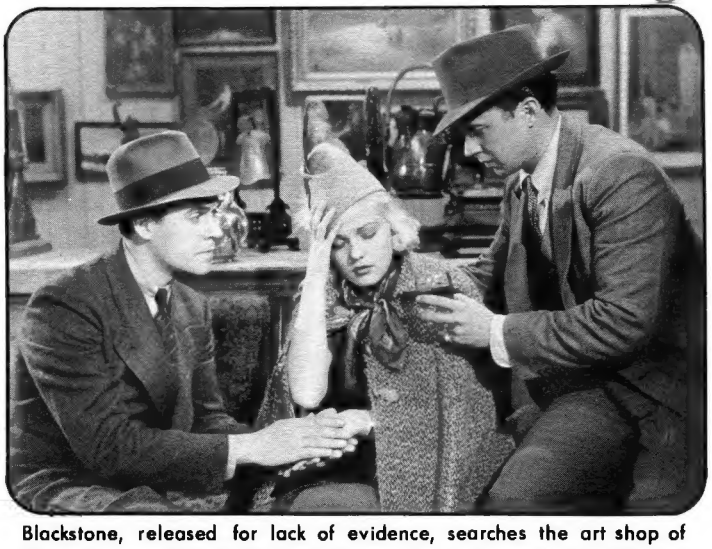
1. Modern Pirates
2. The Ray That Blinds
3. The Man of Many Faces
4. The Listening Shadow
5. False Fires
6. The Dragnet
7. Sealed Lips
8. Exhibit "A"
9. The Masquerader
10. The Forced Lie
11. The Enemy Camp
12. Crime Does Not Pay

Released 4/12/37, SECRET AGENT X-9 was the third serial based on Alex Raymond comic strip characters. Credited to Charles Flanders at this time, the King Features strip had been originally drawn by Raymond from scripts by writers including Dashiell Hammett and Leslie Charteris. (1)

The Belgravian crown jewels, on exhibition in this country, are stolen by *Brenda*, international criminal. Tilden, the federal agent guarding them, is murdered. At FBI headquarters, L. to R., Wheeler (Larry Blake), the otherwise unnamed agent X-9 (Scott Kolk), Dunn (William Royle), an unidentified fabric expert, and Tommy Dawson (Henry Hunter) begin the investigation. (2)

A torn label and a fragment of fabric set the G-Men on the trail of Blackstone (Henry Brandon) who has placed the jewels in a safe deposit box, and Marker who has hidden the receipt in a painting. Dawson (left) and a disguised X-9 apprehend Blackstone in his hotel room. (3)

Marker (Max Hoffman, Jr.) is taken after a speedboat chase. At headquarters, he grabs a revolver from the jacket of Baron Michael Karsten (Monte Blue) of the Belgravian Embassy. He escapes to the roof, but falls to destruction after a wild chase. (4)

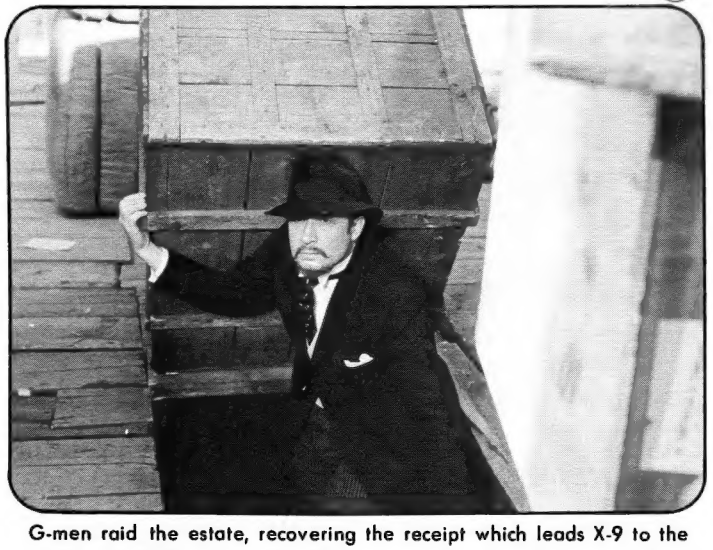


Blackstone, released for lack of evidence, searches the art shop of Shara Graustark (Jean Rogers) where the receipt is hidden. X-9 and Dawson arrive to free Shara, then pursue Blackstone's men. The gang blinds X-9's driver with a brilliant light. His car crashes. (5)

Wheeler and other federal men drive up as X-9 and Pidge, his driver (David Oliver), extricate themselves from the wrecked auto. Blackstone escapes. (6)

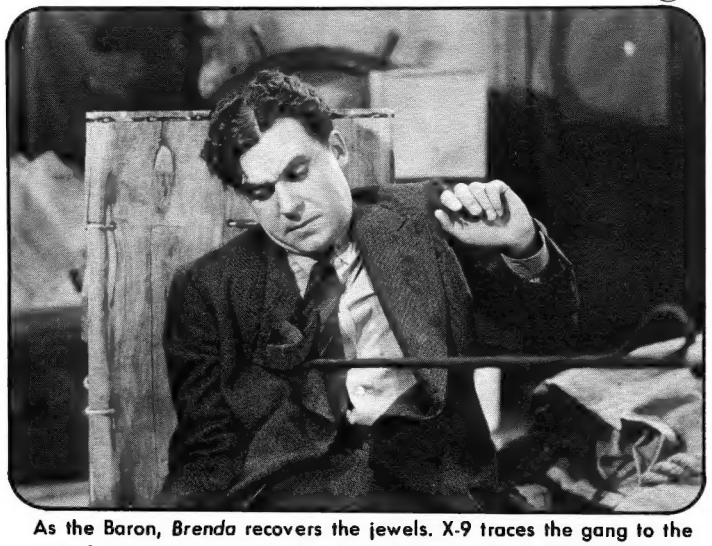
X-9 traces the gang to their country hideout, the mysterious Raymond estate. Investigating, he is menaced by electrically controlled steel gates.

(7)



G-men raid the estate, recovering the receipt which leads X-9 to the jewels. *Brenda's* men capture the Baron. Later, *Brenda* emerges from a waterfront hideout—perfectly disguised as Baron Michael Karsten!

(8)



As the Baron, *Brenda* recovers the jewels. X-9 traces the gang to the waterfront area, cornering hoodlum Sebastian (Jack Cheatham) in a ship chandler's shop. A harpoon discharged in the resulting fight seemingly impales the G-Man.

(9)

Escaping after a raid which costs Tommy Dawson his life, Blackstone and the gang (including Lynn Gilbert as "Rose") gloat over the jewel casket—but it is empty! Trader Delaney would have had an opportunity to remove the gems before his capture in the raid on the ship hideout.

(10)

Delaney (Robert Kortman), paroled, is followed by X-9. Blackstone discovers him with the jewels at the hideout. They struggle, then Blackstone stuns the double crosser with the words, "I am *Brenda!*" X-9 moves in to take his man.

(11)

A clever attorney (Nelson McDowell) questions the case against Blackstone. It appears he may be freed again until X-9 produces evidence which will convict the gangster—not of theft, but of the murder of G-Man Tommy Dawson. The case is closed.

(12)

L. to R. (seated): Frank Yaconelli, Frank McGlynn, and John Mack Brown; (standing) Lynn Gilbert, top featured as the leading femme and seen briefly in the prior SECRET AGENT X-9, Robert Kortman, and George Shelly.

Written specially for TEMI by JAMES A. STRINGHAM

WILD WEST DAYS, Universal's excellent '37 release, returned John Mack Brown to the serials as Kentucky Wade. As in RUSTLERS OF RED DOG (pg. 51), he and a cheerfully disreputable group of adventurers, Trigger Benton (Robert Kortman); Dude Hanford (George Shelly); and, Mike Morales (Frank Yaconelli) battled outlaws, Indians, and forces of nature thru-out a fast moving western cliff-hanger.

The story opened in Brimstone, where newspaper publisher Matt Keeler (Russell Simpson) led the "Secret Seven" gang and renegade Indians in attempting to seize control of all of Paradise Valley. Rancher Larry Monroe (Frank McGlynn) and his sister Lucy (Lynn Gilbert) send for Kentucky after being menaced by Buckskin (Charles Stevens), Steve (Al Bridge), and others of Keeler's gang. Killing one of the outlaws in self defense, Larry is jailed for murder. Keeler incites a lynch mob, but Kentucky frees Larry. Hostile Indians capture the boys and Lucy as they attempt to escape. Purvis (Francis McDonald), local assayer, informs Keeler that ore left by Larry is rich in platinum. The gang ransomes him from Red Hatchet (Chief Thunderbird) but Kentucky and Lucy face death at the stake.

Trigger, Dude, and Mike fire the Indian village, then save their friends under cover of stampeding horses. Larry refuses to reveal the location of his mine and is eventually rescued by Kentucky. The two survive a waterfall plunge as Trigger, Dude and Mike arrive to rout Larry's former captors. They soon discover the worth of the secret mine and fight to protect it. Purvis and then Driscoll, a crooked rancher, are exposed as members of the organization threatening them, but each is ruthlessly murdered before he can lead them to the enemy chief.

Keeler eventually comes under suspicion when Kentucky learns that the Indians are being armed from a source in Brimstone. With his partners he stops the gun runners, then escapes their powder house as a blast destroys it. In the final episode, Red Hatchet leads a last all-out attack as Kentucky attempts to bring in the captured outlaws. A posse arrives in time to defeat the renegades and Kentucky and his men race back to Brimstone for the final saloon shootout.

Brown again made a likeable hero, and Bob Kortman, it should be noted, carried off an unusual role "on the side of the angels" in fine style. Others in the exceptionally good cast were Walter Miller, Bruce Mitchell, Jack Clifford, William Royle, Joseph Girard and Ed Le Saint. The serial, based on the W. R. Burnett novel "Saint Johnson," was directed by Ford Beebe and Cliff Smith.

CHAPTER TITLES

1. **Death Rides the Range**
2. **The Redskins' Revenge**
3. **The Brink of Doom**
4. **The Indians Are Coming**
5. **The Leap for Life**
6. **Death Stalks the Plains**
7. **Six Gun Law**
8. **The Gold Stampede**
9. **Walls of Fire**
10. **The Circle of Doom**
11. **The Thundering Herd**
12. **Rustlers and Redskins**
13. **The Rustlers' Roundup**

CHAPTER TITLES

1. **The Mystery of The Blooming Gardenia**
2. **Death in the Laboratory**
3. **Cleared Mysteries**
4. **The Mystery of The Silver Fox**
5. **Death in the River**
6. **The Criminal Shadow**
7. **Face to Face**
8. **The Fatal Trap**
9. **Parisian House Tops**
10. **Battle Royal**
11. **The Burning Fuse**
12. **The Roofs of Limehouse**
13. **The Sting of the Scorpion**
14. **The Scorpion Unmasked**
15. **The Trap is Sprung**

BLAKE OF SCOTLAND YARD (released 1937) was the last of the 15 independent sound serials. That is, those chapter-plays not specifically produced for or by a major studio. (True, early Mascot serials could be considered as "independent" productions—but that's another story covered on page 151).

Production followed Ralph Byrd's successful stint in DICK TRACY and preceded the excellent SOS COAST GUARD, both Republic releases. Unhappily, BLAKE had few cliff-hangers that warranted the audience returning "next week." On the plus side were some exciting fights during the course of the "action" —thanks to George De Normand, who stunted for Byrd (as he did during the first three Dick Tracy serials). Also, Herbert Rawlinson gave a lively performance—which belied he was, then, 51 years old. Several times he took to disguises to thwart the enemy.

The story centered on a single scheme, and that was not sufficient to carry it thru fifteen episodes. Jerry Sheehan (Byrd) and Hope Mason (Joan Barclay) invent a "Death Ray" machine calculated to bring peace to the world. The project was financed by Sir James Blake (Rawlinson), former inspector of Scotland Yard and Hope's uncle. Munitions-makers, who want no part of peace, employ *The Scorpion* to destroy the machine. From then on, it is simply a matter of *The Scorpion* stealing parts from the "Death Ray" or futilely trying to wreck it.

There were only two genuine suspects, one of which would prove to be the masked *Scorpion*: Henderson (Sam Flint) and Doctor Marshall (Lloyd Hughes).

So that the younger audience could "identify" with someone in the cast 10-year-old Dickie Jones appeared as Bobby Mason, Hope's brother. In the '50s, Jones dropped the "ie" and starred in two popular TV series: "The Range Rider" and "Buffalo Bill Jr.".

L. to R.: Bob Terry (see story on pg. 135), Herbert Rawlinson and The Scorpion.

L. to R.: Sam Flint, Ralph Byrd, Dickie Jones, Rawlinson, Joan Barclay and Lloyd Hughes.

A Cinematograph By

JON TUSKA

Part One / Prologue

Editor's Note: Tuska is executive editor of VIEWS & REVIEWS Magazine. In the Spring of 1970, he authored for his own periodical a much shorter article concerning Columbia Pictures' OVERLAND. The extended analysis for TEMI will be reprinted in his hard-bound volume, "The One Hundred Finest Westerns."

Tuska's cinematograph is divided into three sections: prologue, story and epilogue. He gave us permission to cut where necessary to meet space requirements. But doing so would have done the prologue and epilogue an injustice. The chapter synopses we have condensed, and they will appear, with complete cast credits, in TEMI #12.

The 15-episoder OVERLAND was originally released in August, 1939, and re-released in February, 1951. The reason for using the re-release "lobby" is because it is the only title card issued by Columbia showing the scars on Pegleg's face (upper left corner, third from left).

OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON was certainly one of Columbia Pictures' most lavishly mounted productions with a negative cost of $340,000 and a thirty-six day shooting schedule accomplished in six weeks. In terms of characterization and significant production value, it might well be considered Columbia's finest effort in the chapter play field. Stock footage and interpolations from previous Columbia productions were at a minimum. A few shots from Tim McCoy's "End of the Trail" (Col. '32) were most frequently used, particularly in chapters three and fourteen, but the lighting, blending, and costuming were such, and the shots themselves of a brevity, that to the untrained eye the source would be unidentifiable.

Two production units were assigned to the picture, one under Sam Nelson, the other under Norman Deming who had been directing action pictures since working with Hoot Gibson at Universal in the '20s. The assignment was a matter of economy, but, unlike Nat Levine who had earlier pursued this practice at Mascot Pictures, the script, which was the size of the New York telephone directory, was not divided up according to interiors and exteriors, with a director deployed exclusively to one or the other. According to Norman Deming, no extraneous footage was shot, and each of the two units attacked the script an episode at a time: one with Bill Elliott and the leading man group, one with Trevor Bardette and the heavy group. Despite the irregularity of this approach, no noticeable differences are to be seen in consistency of portrayal or plot development thru-out all fifteen chapters. This, in itself, constitutes an interesting commentary on the *auteur* theory, in that the scenario, and the actors' conception of the scenario *together* made OVERLAND the fine cinematic experience it remains.

The sources for the basic plot ingredients to OVERLAND can be found in several sound serials of the early '30s, and the writers drew freely on this material, incorporating much of it in new and unique ways. While the idea of a white renegade leading a band of Indians had long been a standard prop of the serial, most memorably depicted in the silent serial HAWK OF THE HILLS (Pathe, '27), with Frank Lackteen as the "Hawk," it wasn't until THE LIGHTNING WARRIOR (Mascot, '31) that the variation was first used of having this renegade leader simultaneously masquerade as a prominent citizen of the beseiged community. In WARRIOR, *The Wolf Man*, a figure cloaked in a black cape and with a high, concealing black sombrero, hopes to force the whites to leave a rich mining district thru organizing Indian attacks on their settlements. This serial also had the mystery man summon his warriors by means of a wolf-call, another ingredient re-appearing in OVERLAND. An invisible narrator in WARRIOR detailed the action of previous chapters, illustrated by appropriate clips, rather than depending on title cards or somehow working this into the plot. OVERLAND also adopted this device, using the narrator at the beginning, and again at the end, where, in a sort of trailer, the next episode's action is described. Benjamin Kline, long chief director of photography for the Columbia action productions, had been one of the directors assigned to WARRIOR, and he was charged with photography in the shooting of OVERLAND.

The concept of a legion of riders dressed in black was inspired by the Don Cossacks. Its first use in a serial with a Western setting, and therefore both American and alien to the Crimean prototype, was FIGHTING WITH KIT CARSON (Mascot, '33), where the "Mystery Riders," as they were called, mounted on white steeds and dressed in black, actually sang a Cossack song, translated into English by Lee Zahler (who also worked on OVERLAND).

But the most novel, dramatic, compelling character of all in OVERLAND, and the portrayal which truly makes the picture the memorable film it is, belongs to Pegleg, played by Trevor Bardette. Using the old idea of a mystery man leading the Indians, Bardette had both to play Arthur Mitchell, a fur trader at Stewart's Post, and the peg-legged, deformed leader of the "Black Raiders." What stands out is that Bardette really did play *both* roles, not, as in so many cases, letting an actor not otherwise included in the story be cast as the disguised mystery man and then unmasking one of the credited characters in the film in the last chapter, the way Theodore Lorch had portrayed *The Wolf Man* in THE LIGHTNING WARRIOR, and Frank Brownlee was unmasked, or Edmund Cobb played *The Rattler* in MYSTERY MOUNTAIN (Mascot, '34), and Edward Earle was exposed as the culprit. Bardette was scrupulous

about his characterization, even to the point of having Mitchell walk with a slight limp, one of his personal touches. To maintain this duality without giving it away would of itself have been demanding. Bardette, however, added an almost archetypal suggestiveness to his portrayal of Pegleg by summoning much of the strange dreams of power and crazed fanaticism true of Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's classic "Moby-Dick". "I did not consciously copy Ahab," Bardette wrote to me some time ago, "but *I had read* 'Moby-Dick' and an actor is inclined to organize his 'total experience' when preparing a role."

Bill Elliott (as Kit Carson) and the chief suspects congregated. L. to R. are Olin Francis, Elliott, Hal Taliaferro, LeRoy Mason, Trevor Bardette, and Kenneth MacDonald.

Bardette's make-up as Pegleg was quite complex. The scars on his left cheek, attributed in the script to a birth defect (and, thus, another link with Ahab's scar, which was symbolically at one with the mark placed on Cain in "Genesis"), were made of latex, applied often twice a day, depending on the necessary shifts in characterization. The leg was a very involved harness, consisting of a special boot with a long strap built into its top which was attached to a broad, heavy leather belt at his waist, pulling his right foot upwards and forward. Onto this contraption, then, was strapped the pegleg, fitted to his knee and around his thigh and calf. It was painful, and Bardette could stand it for little more than an hour before his leg would go to sleep. The rest was camera angle. Bardette's double in all this was Earl Bund, a remarkable stuntman who really had only one leg, and who also doubled for several others in the cast, altho John Dahdin stood in for Bill Elliott. Bund at the time, according to Bardette, was the only man in the Los Angeles area permitted by the F.B.I. to teach machine gunning.

When Pegleg evokes his men to his dream of empire in the first episode, or when he is seen seated atop his stallion with a throne-shaped rock behind him in later chapters, or looking down from a high precipice as he frequently does to the action below, or, as in chapters 14 and 15, when he is silhouetted against the flares and fires of the camp and the iron smelter, the drama and tragedy of this insanely ambitious man is portrayed in such a manner by Bardette as to raise the story line above the mere mundane matter of the matinee serial. The possibilities in this film are such, in fact, that was even the slightest emphasis along these lines carried further, the serial would have passed beyond its realm into that of the truly classic. Deming, who directed Bardette, was awed by his portrayal.

Pegleg is outside the ken of the merely human, or the mystery man of a serial, by virtue of Bardette's interpretation. The realities of Pegleg's force of personality and power of soul exceed anything attributed to him in the script. It is Bardette's superb ability as an actor which brings an unforgettable quality of malignancy and darkness into what otherwise might have been as dull a plot as a whale-hunt without the presence of Ahab.

Viewed in sequence and at one sitting, as serials were never intended to be, OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON may appear to be one long series of fights.

OVERLAND was shot in large part on location in Kanab, Utah, in natural caves and on the plain. Pegleg's killer stallion, Midnight, was a horse belonging to Ralph McCutcheon, named Blackie, brilliantly photographed thru-out the serial in many action sequences, particularly stamping men to death. One of the most noteworthy achievements of the serial was the musical score composed by Lee Zahler, which, as in a Wagnerian musical drama, consisted of themes or *leit-motifs* identified with certain characters or groups, increasing the tension, and even, at times, anticipating the action. The thundering and demonic musical motif used for Pegleg was, in turn, deepened in effectiveness by the choice of camera angles and lighting surrounding the one-legged figure in white satin shirt, atop his black stallion, with a wide-brimmed sombrero, the crown of which shadowed the right side of his face, the left side heightened therefore, and accentuating the scars. (The scars were hidden by a false beard when Bardette was playing the trapper Mitchell.)

(Concluded in TEMI #12)

Jon Tuska wishes to thank Screen Gems and Sid Weiner in New York, Norman Deming, and Trevor Bardette for their assistance in the preparation of this article. Also, the three photos on pages 147 and 148 are courtesy of Screen Gems.

Bill Elliott is held prisoner in chapter 14 when he attempts to enter Raider Valley disguised as one of Pegleg's gang.

REMINISCING WITH MANUEL KING

Manuel King as Baru, with his helpmate Bonga, in DARKEST AFRICA. This was Republic Pictures' first serial, released in 1936. (See related stories on pages 78 and 102).

•

Our sincerest thanks to King for granting this interview. He is, today, vice president and general manager of Animals, Inc., P.O. Box 456, Bellaire, Texas 77401.

Q. Isn't your real name Emanuel King?

A. Nope. Plain Manuel, taken from my mother's Mexican name—Manuela.

Q. Republic in '36 publicity listed you as "an 11-year-old animal trainer." Is the age correct?

A. I was born Sept. 5, 1923, so was twelve years old at the time the serial was released (2/15/36).

Q. Republic publicity also said: "Since the age of nine, Manuel has traveled with his own wild animal act, which he trained himself." True?

A. I had only been 'on-the-road' two years. Toured the middle-western fair circuit for Barnes/Carruthers Agency (Chicago) and appeared at Million Dollar Pier, Atlantic City, New Jersey. Later I traveled with circuses in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. For the time, my young age, and lack of today's mass promotional media, the act was 'undersold', if you will. Not many adults ever handled 15 male lions—*alone.*

Q. How did you originally become involved with wild animals? And who trained you?

A. My father was an animal importer and dealer. Therefore, you might say I was raised around wild animals. My first trainer was John C. Guilfoyle, who also gave able assistance to the 'world's greatest'—Clyde Beatty. Beatty was beyond doubt the greatest showman ever to step into an arena with wild animals. Memories of the suspense he created still make the hair stand up on the back of my neck. I never attempted to copy his style. Those who have, have failed miserably. Clyde could make an audience appreciate the danger and proved it getting hurt several times.

Q. Were you awe-struck when you entered the heavenly gates of a movie studio—Republic?

A. Nope! Believe it or not, it was all work. I didn't mind it. Did enjoy visiting sets with Gene Autry, Roy Rogers (at the time, a member of the Sons of the Pioneers), etc. Also fun attending luncheons and meeting Mickey Rooney, Jackie Cooper, etc.

Q. What wild animals did you enjoy/not enjoy performing with?

A. Enjoyed lions, particularly my group of 15 males, plus two tigers later. Never liked bears, and could tolerate chimpanzees and elephants.

Q. Why were your scenes with animals shot in Brownsville, Texas, rather than Hollywood?

A. We had easy access to numerous animals, plus climate, availability of land, etc. Most scenes (directed by "Breezy" Eason) were shot at our animal compound.

Q. Any narrow escapes in filming the serial?

A. Only during an explosion scene. Clyde and I had our eyebrows singed and suffered a bruise or two. Had the rest of the day off as a result. Enjoyed the rest!

Q. You mentioned (see page 118) that the fabulous flying *Bat-Men were made of balsa wood. A TEMI reader says the material was 'rubber'; another says 'papier-mache'. You should know best since you were on the scene. Care to comment further?*

A. Well, the wings were made of a rubber-like material. The small sizes (of Bat-Men) could have been 'papier-mache'. But the large 'dummies' were definitely balsa wood. By the way, the bigger models were seven feet or so tall. The miniature Bat-Men used for the 'group flights' were in two or more sizes—18 to 24 inches, as best I can recall.

Q. Tell us about the two directors, Joseph Kane and B. Reeves (Breezy) Eason.

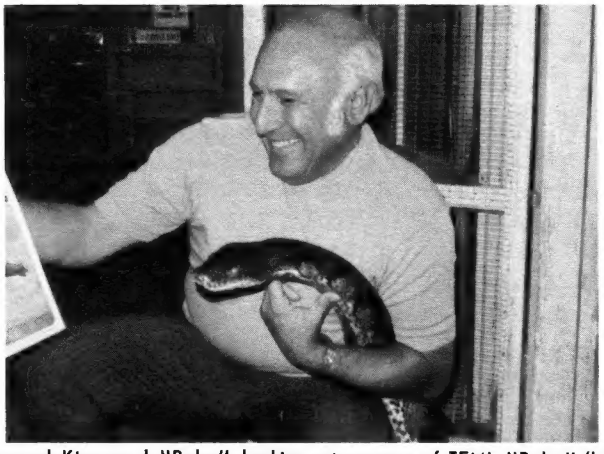
A. Compared to 'Breezy', Joe was tough to work for. He was upset more than once with my Texas drawl—"you all". 'Breezy' could make you work and enjoy it. He was a practical joker on the set, too. Had me climb a tree, look off, point, and lo and behold, a 'gorilla' landed alongside me! (See photo.) My first encounter with 'Bonga'. They didn't show the part where I almost fell out of the tree, thank goodness.

Q. Didn't Ray Benard (later Ray "Crash" Corrigan) play your faithful companion Bonga?

A. Correct. He also played the principal Bat-Man.

Q What did you do with your life after you completed DARKEST AFRICA?

A. Kept working cats thru high school, 1942, then entered service, 1943-'46. While in the service, I won $5.00 from a buddy. Bet him I could write and get an autographed picture of the pretty in a magazine ad (who just happened to be Elaine Shepherd, my 'sister' in AFRICA). Pretty sneeky, no? I married while in service. Have two children—Anita LeVair, just recently married, and a son, Abe W., stationed aboard the U.S.S. Joseph Strauss in the Pacific.

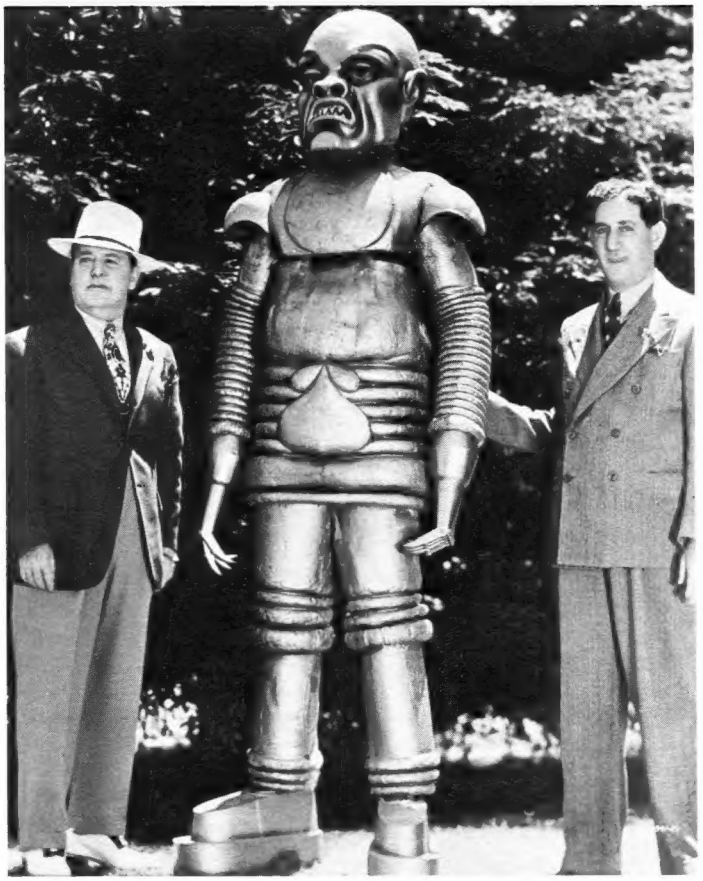


Manuel King and "Baby" looking at a copy of TEMI. "Baby" (his name) is a 17-foot, nine-year-old Regal Python.

MEET THE DIRECTORS / THE UNSUNG SERIAL HEROES

Photos of directors are rare to come by, simply because they created the action and did not participate in what was filmed. They did, however, have their name immortalized on a title card. Center is Gene Autry visiting Tom Tyler on the set of ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL (Republic, '41). The gentleman at the left is 5'5" Louis Friedlander, who later shortened his name to Lew Landers. At the time, he was directing a series of Autry features.

Earlier as Friedlander, he helmed five serials for Universal: THE VANISHING SHADOW, THE RED RIDER, TAILSPIN TOMMY (all in '34); THE CALL OF THE SAVAGE and RUSTLERS OF RED DOG (both in '35). Nine years later he returned to serials as Landers and directed BLACK ARROW (Columbia, '44).



Center is the 8-foot iron robot used so effectively by Bela Lugosi in THE PHANTOM CREEPS (Universal, '39). At right is one of the directors, Saul Goodkind. He had teamed up with Ford Beebe (not shown) on this serial as well as BUCK ROGERS, which followed.

On the left is producer Henry MacRae, who had started out as a director before taking over the production of Universal's serials. He and Ray Taylor alternated directing most of Universal's sound serials thru 1932. MacRae died in 1944, two years before the release of the last Universal chapter play: THE MYSTERIOUS MR. M.

[Editor's Note: Our thanks to Val Warren for the Friedlander photo. Jim Stringham, TEMI's chief of photographs, came up with the Goodkind gem. Other directors already shown are Ray Taylor (pg. 39), William Witney (pg. 48), and James Horne (pg. 117).]

CHAPTER 13 / A NECROLOGY OF SERIAL PERSONALITIES COMPILED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF BILL STEWART

	Born	Died	Age
Hank Bell	1/21/92	2/ 4/50	58
Dick Curtis	5/11/02	1/ 3/52	49
John Dilson	2/18/91	6/ 3/44	53
Franklyn Farnum	6/ 5/83	7/ 4/61	77
Richard Fiske	11/20/15	6/ /44	29
George "Gabby" Hayes	5/ 7/85	2/ 9/69	83
Fred Kohler, Sr.	4/21/88	10/28/38	50
William B. Lava	3/18/11	2/20/71	59
Rex Lease	2/11/03	1/ 3/66	62
Gwen Lee	11/12/04	8/20/61	56
Arthur Loft	5/25/97	1/ 1/47	49
Tom London	8/24/89	12/ 5/63	74
Howard Lydecker		9/28/69	58
J. Farrell MacDonald	4/14/75	8/ 2/52	77
Boots Mallory	10/22/13	12/ 1/58	45
Edwin Maxwell		8/13/48	62
Kermit Maynard	9/20/97	1/16/71	73
Sam Nelson	5/31/96	5/ 1/63	66
Pat O'Malley	9/ 3/90	5/21/66	75
Frank Shannon	7/27/74	2/ 1/59	84
Cliff Smith		9/17/37	51
Edwin Stanley	11/22/80	12/25/44	64
Conway Tearle	5/17/78	10/ 1/38	60
Chief Thunderbird	8/ 6/66	4/ 6/46	79
Richard Tucker	6/ 4/84	12/ 5/42	58
Henry B. Walthall	3/16/78	6/17/36	58
Mack V. Wright	1895	8/14/65	69
Clara Kimball Young	9/ 6/90	10/15/60	70
Lee Zahler	8/14/93	2/21/47	53

THOSE ENDURING SERIAL FANS

Letters from TEMI fans are most welcome. However, the information supplied in these columns by readers is based on their opinions. The editor does not necessarily purport the info to be complete, exact or accurate.

Center is Ken Maynard, star of MYSTERY MOUNTAIN (released by Mascot in December of '34). Appearing briefly was whiskered 26-year-old Gene Autry (left). The following February, Autry starred in THE PHANTOM EMPIRE. Photo courtesy of Val Warren.

ERRATUM AND ADDENDA

The man you suggest might be Walter Brennan in THE VANISHING LEGION (pg. 5) is, in fact, Dick Dickinson. He was a frequent Mascot player, and, altho dropped from the "Motion Picture Almanac" in '38, remained in pictures thru the 40's.

"Daring Danger" (pg. 7) was a Columbia feature of 1932, not a Universal release.

Hobart Bosworth played The Sagamore in THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS (pg. 10), based on the character of Chingachgook, but never referred to by that name in the serial.

THE DEVIL HORSE (pg. 14) was called Apache in the credits to the serial, and El Diablo in the script. Nat Levine bought the animal from Tracy Lane who owned a stable in Hollywood at the time.

The story about what Frankie Darro was paid is untrue. I mentioned it to Levine, and he said Frankie's agent was much too smart for anything like $50.00 a week. Frankie was never under contract to Mascot, but was paid a flat fee for each serial, increasing from the first to the last, and ranging from $1,000 to $5,000.

[Editor's Note: The info re Darro was obtained from "Variety", dated 5/3/1932, and presumed that it came from a Mascot publicity release. This fact was relayed to the letter writer. He responded: Levine may have tried to put Frankie under that kind of a contract, but I must rely on him when he says that this just wasn't so. We will be talking to Darro on this matter, and that may answer the question finally.]

El Shaitan's organization in THE THREE MUSKETEERS (pg. 18) was called "The Devil's Circle." Yakima Canutt stood in for the rebel leader in all exteriors, Bob Frazer for most interiors and some close-ups shot outside; Wilfred Lucas played the figure in only three scenes. Frazer is killed off as Major Booth in chapter ten (not #9).

Mr. Jim Harmon in his letter on Tom Mix (pg. 84) makes a claim as to his age. Mr. A. Henry Hass, curator for the historical marker program of the State Historical Society for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, wrote to me in response to program three of "They Went That-A-Way" (T.V. series appearing on educational stations) that the census for 1880 shows that Thomas Edwin Mix was born 5 January 1880 in Gibson Township, of Edwin and Elizabeth Mix, and that his maternal grandmother was living with them at the time, Rebecca Smith. It was only later, according to other state records, that the family moved to Dubois, which is usually given as his birthplace. Further, records of the United States Department of Defense give no indication that Mix served in any capacity, save in the Infantry during the Spanish American War. Lastly, Mix was never a lawman; save once, for a short time, he was a night marshal, in Kansas. And, Tim McCoy has a photograph, given to him by an admirer, of Mix doing a stint for horse rustling. Mix, his wives' memoirs, his many supposed relatives with their "true" stories, and Fox publicity have done much harm. The confusion is so great that perhaps most people prefer the mythology to the facts. THE MIRACLE RIDER (pg. 50), for the record, cost Mascot $85,000 in 1935 to make, with Mix getting paid $40,000 for a total of four weeks' work. It grossed better than a million upon initial release, making it Mascot's most successful serial, with MYSTERY MOUNTAIN second, and THE PHANTOM EMPIRE third. Mix's activity on the serial was confined, for economic reasons, to one week outdoors, and three for interiors, with the outdoor unit using Cliff Lyons to shoot around him, saving on production time.

[Editor's Note: The fact that Levine could produce the 15-episoder RIDER for $45,000, exclusive of Mix's fee, is deserving of elucidation. And this we asked for. The letter writer was kind enough to respond.]

When THE MIRACLE RIDER was made, extras such as Edmund Cobb, Charles King, and Tom London, who appeared in the film, worked for a flat $125 a week. (A week was Monday thru Saturday, dawn 'til dusk.) Levine, of course, had leased the Sennett lot and the sets were, if you remember, minimal, basically five interiors, and the newly, cheaply constructed Indian encampment exterior. Levine's average cost on a serial production in 1931-2 was $45,000. This was before he started using top-flight talent that cost money, like Ken Maynard and Tom Mix.

Don't forget that Levine had only to incur the expense of a camera negative and rushes before release. The serials were all sold on a "state's rights" basis, with their giving him a cash guarantee before delivery of prints (which included the cost of all prints). The unions were not that strong in the early and middle 'Thirties and worked very cheaply. Even as late as the middle 'Forties, the Columbia-Katzman serials were turned out for less than $100,000 according to Spencer Gordon Bennet who worked on them!

Jon Tuska
Milwaukee, Wisc.

FLASH GORDON

On pg. 126, Theodore Lorch is listed as the High Priest. On pg. 128 the actor in photo as High Priest is Lon Poff.

Philip Watterson
San Diego, Calif.

Editor's Note: Publicity captions on two photos show him to be played by Lorch. That doesn't mean they are necessarily correct. Checking further!

* * *

DICK TRACY

Robert Terry (pg. 135) was also in DICK TRACY RETURNS ('38) in the role of Reynolds. "The Film Daily Production Guide" for the first six months of 1936 lists Melvin Purvis, who was a real-life G-man, as *star* of the original Republic serial DICK TRACY. However, the subsequent casting of Ralph Byrd was inspired (as was the casting of Buster Crabbe as FLASH GORDON).

Bill McDowell
Charleston, W. Va.

* * *

SHADOW OF CHINATOWN

In England, SHADOW OF CHINATOWN (pg. 100) was called THE YELLOW PHANTOM. An interesting piece of dialogue occurs near the end of episode five, attesting Bela Lugosi's greater concern for animals as opposed to his two-legged antagonists (confirmed in SOS COAST GUARD, pg. 125). Lugosi plans to kill the unconscious hero (Herman Brix) by means of a large fish bowl. The rays of the sun will shine, magnified, thru the bowl, serving as a "sinister ray." Before committing this act of murder, Lugosi tells a henchman to take the fish out of the bowl and place them in another nearby. His accomplice (Luana Walters) asks: "Are the lives of those miserable fish more important than those of human beings?" Comes Lugosi's reply: "The fish are not my enemies! I have no quarrel with them."

Harold W. Seacombe
London, England

TEMI / EDITOR & PUBLISHER • ROBERT M. MALCOMSON
CHIEF — ILLUSTRATIONS DIVISION • JAMES A. STRINGHAM

Presenting OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON (Columbia Pictures' eighth serial release) in this chapter of TEMI is deliberate. Admittedly it belies the magazine's policy to treat each serial in sequence of release. But to allow all of Columbia's chapter plays to be pre-judged for quality on their lackluster initial entry, the '37 JUNGLE MENACE, would be an inequity since it is unrepresentative of their subsequent, more ambitious, efforts in the field. *** Urgently need synopses of chapters one and two, SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND. Can you help? *** The fact that Elmer Clifton is erroneously credited for directing THE BLACK COIN on page 113 is not the fault of the author, Jim Stringham. *Al Herman directed.* The error is the responsibility of the editor. Sorry. *** Credit for the ZORRO RIDES AGAIN article belongs to several. Your editor fashioned the story from the script and memories, plus material and photos contributed by ERIC HOFFMAN. Also, photos were borrowed from the private collections of ANGEL GUTIERREZ and, naturally, JIM STRINGHAM. *** Kudos to EARL BLAIR, JR. for putting us on the track of MANUEL KING. Nice gentlemen, both. *** Available in July will be 50 copies of chapters #1 thru #10 that are plastic spiral bound with a hardboard front and back cover. The price will be $12.00 shipped pre-paid in a protective container.

— BOB MALCOMSON

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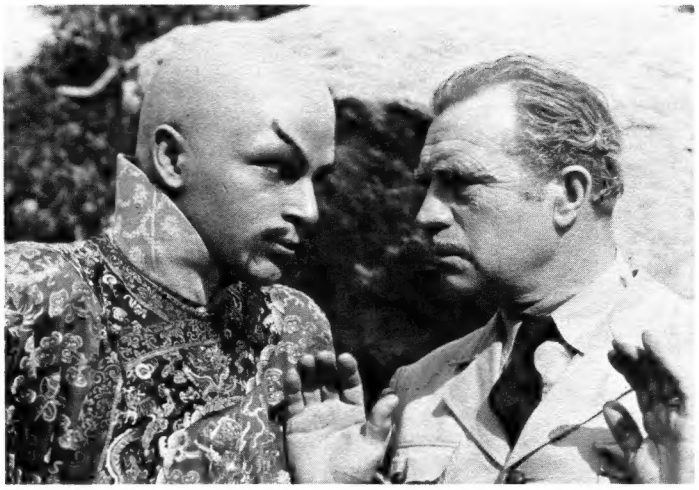

Henry Brandon (left) and William Royle in DRUMS of FU MANCHU (Rep., '40). They were also antagonists in JUNGLE JIM (pg. 130) and SECRET AGENT X-9 (pg. 142).

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